

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 03931 110940Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----084725 110941Z /10

O 110913Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8722
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 3931

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SY, LE, UR
SUBJ: LEBANON: REPORTS THAT SPECIAL SYRIAN ENVOY HAS GONE
TO MOSCOW

REF: STATE 173495

1. WE HAVE HAD NO INDICATION AS YET TENDING TO SUPPORT
STORY THAT ASSAD HAS SENT A SPECIAL ENVOY TO MOSCOW.
VISITING BBC CORRESPONDENT TRIED TO TRACK TOWN BEIRUT
NEWSPAPER REPORT JULY 9 THAT RUSSIANS HAD PROMISED AID TO
SYRIA IF IT WERE ATTACKED BY ISAREL AS A RESULT OF LEBANESE
DEVELOPMENTS, BUT HE COULD FIND NO CONFIRMATION OF IT IN
DAMASCUS. FONMIN KHADDAM'S INTERPRETER ABU FARES TOLD
POLITICAL OFFICER JULY 11 THAT SYRIANS WERE DISCUSSING
LEBANESE SITUATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR BUT TO THE BEST OF
HIS KNOWLEDGE NO SPECIAL ENVOY HAD BEEN SENT.

2. COMMENT: OUR INITIAL JUDGMENT IS THAT ABU FARES IS
CORRECT AND THAT SYRIANS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING
LEBANESE SITUATION THROUGH SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS

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BUT HAVE NOT SENT A SPECIAL ENVOY TO MOSCOW. SOVIET
UNION DID NOT INITIALLY SUPPORT SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN
LEBANON AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNCOMFORTABLE WITH IT. AN
ADDITIONAL AREA OF STRAIN IS THAT SOVIETS WOULD LIKE TO
SEE LEBANESE COMMUNISTS EMERGE AS MAJOR LEFTIST
INFLUENCE IN LEBANESE POLITICAL LIFE, WHEREAS SYRIA IS
SUPPORTING LEBANESE BRANCE OF THE BAATH UNDER QANSO. WE

ALSO BELIEVE SYRIAN WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ESCALATE
SEBANESE SITUATION OUT OF INTER-ARAB CONTEXT UNLESS IN
EXTREMIS.

3. FOREGOING IS ADMITTEDLY INCONCLUSIVE. WE WILL STY TO
OBTAIN BETTER READING OVER COMING FEW DAYS.
PELLETREAU

SECRET

NNN

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